

YOU REMIND ME
OF SOMEONE...



SHAGGY

78



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SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES is the club genzine of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, Inc. (11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601, USA). SHAGGY is published approximately twice yearly and is available for trade, letters of comment, or contributions. It is also available for those who qualify to receive "De Profundis," the LASFS newsletter. If none of these ways can get you a copy, \$1 per copy will also work. Copyright (c) 1982 by the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, Inc. One time rights only have been aquired from signed contributors. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the LASFS, Inc. nor the editors of SHAGGY. Please make all cheques payable to the LASFS, Inv. Please send all locs and other contributions to Marty Cantor c/o the LASFS.

Staff

Mark R. Sharpe - All the ~~types~~ typing

Marty Cantor - Everything else.

This issue is a revival of a revival ~~and is the third issue of 1980~~ and our distribution policy is different from the distribution policy which we followed for issues 76 and 77. Your editors would like to try to involve the current LASFS membership in SHAGGY to a greater degree than we did in the previous two issues. To do this we have decided that all currently attending members should receive copies. This will also enable us to cut costs by giving us a mailing list large enough to allow us use of LASFS' bulk mailing permit. This involved a change in funding. The 1980 revival involved funding by club seed money with further funding coming from sales of copies. Under the new plan lassed at the LASFS club meeting of May 27, the LASFS will pay the costs of SHAGGY (there is a money limitation but the editors see no problem with this). We hope that SHAGGY can spark a revival of interest in genzine fandom amongst LASFS members.

Enjoy.

EDITORIALS

Hello there, remember us? Yeah, this is SHAGGY, back with you just a little bit late. Put it this way. If we were still on our thrice yearly schedule this would be the third issue of 1980. Considering the fact that when Mike Gunderloy and I resurrected SHAGGY it had been dormant for twelve years I guess that a two year gap 'twixt this and the previous issue is not all that bad. Our new periodicity will be "whenever" - somehow I believe that we will somehow manage to get out issues at a rate more than once every two years. We shall see.

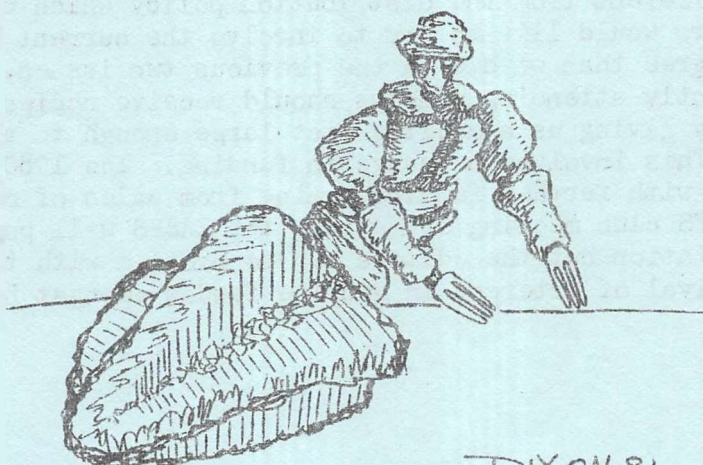
For this issue I have still another ~~in a long line~~ co editor, Mark R. Sharpe. Mike Glycer found that he was overextended in fanac and begged ~~on his hands and knees~~ off continuing as co-editor. Asked Danise Deckert (current LASFS procedural director) when she appointed Mark as co-editor (at the request of Mark and myself), "To be a co-editor of SHAGGY does your first name have to begin with 'M'?" Maybe so. Were I still not connected with this project I would say that working on SHAGGY is dangerous to people whose first names begin with 'M'. After one issue Mike Gunderloy gaffiated and moved to the East Coast (where he is slowly resurfacing in fandom), Mike Glycer joined the Hugo Losers Club (maybe his resignation from SHAGGY will make him a Hugo winner), and our Art Director, Maureen Garrett, moved to Northern California. It is quite possible that Mark's assumption of co-editorship will cause him to start losing at Hearts.

---Marty Cantor

In the beginning there was the word, and the word was late. And, lo, out of the East came a wise ass to help the Lord Tin Ghod Emeritis change the word. The word became published and was no longer late. A Covenant was then made between the Lord Tin Ghod, the wise ass, and the Chosen People to keep the word 'whenever.' A plague of Locus (or File 770 or SFR) on those who break the Covenant.

((Typist's Last Word Department: Marty, my boy, NOTHING but a good player will cause me to lose at Hearts. This means you will continue to lose to me.))

---Mark Sharpe



DIXON 81

social controls & fandom

BY mike shupp

Most human institutions recognize a continuum of human behavior. People are not all in the same state, all the time. They get sick, for example. So mechanisms are built into our institutions and new institutions established to make allowances for human frailty. Sick time, for example. Dental insurance. Hospitals. Medicare. Psychiatry. Medical schools.

Of course human problems do not always arise from frailty; general contrariness and deviate behavior of one sort or another are factors. Again, mechanisms and institutions have been devised to cope with these: time cards, ~~strike votes~~, the Anti-Defamation League, minimum wage laws, Alcoholics Anonymous, traffic cops, armies...

In other words, numerous organizations and regulations exist which govern our behavior and attempt to steer it into channels which are socially approved. I classify these as "social controls."

Some social controls appear to have little relevance, either because they impinge peripherally on our day to day lives, such as the ground rules for debates organized by the League of Women Voters, or because they primarily regulate the behavior of others. Licensing requirements for architects would be an example; so would the Hippocratic Oath. Others may be blatantly coercive and conspicuous, such as conscription for the armed services.

The majority are potentially coercive, but seldom noticed. We cooperate with them, not observing that we are traveling in mental ruts, crediting law abiding behavior to innate virtues rather than to mere habit. For example: when did my reader last think seriously about robbing a bank? Assuming you did not respond to the thought by actually doing so, why not?

Were you deterred by moral considerations? Or by the risk of being arrested and sent to prison? And regardless of your answer, do you spend some time each day debating the wisdom and practicality of bank robbery? Or, as I suspect, do you find the entire notion preposterous, and reject it without a second of belib-eration?

Let's take a second example: traffic laws. Few Americans will drive a deserted superhighway at 20 miles per hour, and city streets at 80. It's just not #practical" to drive that way, most of us would decide after some thought. But in general, we do not think deliberately about our speed, and drive according to habit, influenced by the behavior and speed of motorists around us or which we have observed in the past, dimly aware of the "control" exerted by the occasional traffic cop. And we come to a halt at traffic lights, few of us realizing there is anything peculiarly American about our habitual, but culture-constrained, practice of actually stopping at stop signs.

Consider school attendance. Most states allow students to quit school after tenth grade, or at age 16. But few children do, even those who have passed something like the California high school equivalency competence test, and the school leaving age has been increased by statutes ever since the turn of the century. "Everyone" goes to school, after all, and today "everyone" graduates. And most of us pay lip services to the idea of a college education; it's useful for getting a "good job," after all -- ask "everyone."

If you're out of school, did you go to work today at the "good job?" If so, you probably showed up around 8 a.m., or felt guilty if you didn't. Most of us like to be "on time" and "work starts at 8" doesn't it? And you probably stayed around till 5 p.m. or whenever the official quitting time was, even if you found little to do, or a lot. "Work's over at 5" and "everyone" else is going home...

You might have called in sick, and that probably caused you some internal debate. On the one hand, sick time is there to be used. On the other, use of sick time even when you happen to be sick is frowned upon by some managers; you want a good review for the year; you'd like a raise and maybe a promotion....perhaps you should go to work, anyhow.

Did you vote in the last election? It's a method of distributing power peculiar to only a few societies, not at all a procedure common in most of the world, in most of history. But you probably take it for granted. After all, it works here - you'd probably be upset to find a poll worker throwing your ballot away - there are laws against that, after all.

You voted, and you candidate for governor lost the election? Disappointing, but you'll live with it. No doubt the governor was disappointed also - but he has to put up with it also. The state police will not declare martial law and gun down his victorious opponent; if they did, the Federal government would intervene as well, obeying a Constitutional requirement to "guarantee a republican form of government" in all the states.

Beginning to get the picture? Much of our existence is dominated by pervasive, coercive agencies we take for granted - a thousand invisible iron hand in unseen velvet gloves. Invisible because we adopt customs and behavior which make it unnecessary for us to think explicitly about the options - many of them shocking - which actually lie open to us. There are controls placed upon us, and we are controlled.

This is not a bad thing. Our unthinking adherence to ultimately arbitrary standards and institutions permit some persons to turn their minds to interests and activities not so constrained while preventing others from destroying their accomplishments. It makes civilization possible.

The examples I have provided are drawn from society as a whole, largely from government, since the controls created by it are imposed willy-nilly on all of us without choice. It should be clear, however, that this is not a necessary restriction and that most smaller groups operate under social controls of some fairly explicit nature - camera clubs, African violet fanciers, associations of pharmacists, police departments, churches, etc.

This is not unreasonable. All groups have some objectives and expect their members to help further those objectives. Recognizing that not all the world shares their objectives, they create and employ methods to purge their ranks of infidels, to detect heresy, and to preserve the faith by disciplining such "social deviates" as fall within their grasp. So lawyers found offering bribes are disbarred; people who trade in their Super-Carreras for Hondas quit Porsche Clubs; Mennonites shun church members who have television sets....

Fandom as a society lacks genuine controls. (I speculate that perhaps this is indicative of the inchaotic, purposeless nature of fandom as a hobby - but no matter.) It lacks sources of authority and coercion. Consequently, it lacks a shared morality and a shared consensus of values. Its few attempts to establish such controls usually take the form of ad hoc and ex post facto restrictions designed to bar individuals from specific events (conventions, for example) or activities (such as apa-hacking or convention-running) on a localized basis. Lacking reliable institutions for establishing and identifying social deviance (vops and courts, to be specific), such efforts

are not infrequently misguided and ineffectual - reactionary in the true sense of the word, and kangaroo court justice at best.

What we have instead is gossip, and a broad, hard-to-offend tolerance.

Consider: Is there a fannish "policy" on child-molestation? No.

On paying dues at LASFS meetings? Sort of - people who avoid paying dues will irritate the Treasurer, but the nominal sanction in the by-laws for expulsion of frequent offenders has never been used, since some kind-souled type will invariably appear to cover the required sum.

On slander? Certainly not.

There really are no constraints; there's just a void. Real social controls affect fannish behavior only when the outside decides to treat fans by rules imposed on non-fans: as when FBI agents show up in huckster rooms looking for illegal movie stills, or when the hotel decides to close down the swimming pool because it is getting complaints about the skinnydipping. From mundanes, of course; it's not fannish to complain.

Of course, things appear smooth enough on the surface. Fans aren't trying to get anything done as a rule, which reduces the need for constraints. To the extent there are common behavior patterns in fandom, it is mostly being sociable, genially lecherous, capable of witty and prompt oneupmanship, interested in gossip, being pleasant no matter what one really feels, etc.

Where is such behavior appropriate?

High school, perhaps. A nice lily-white high school in a nice section of town, where all the kids come from upper middle class families... A world without servants and without poverty, where the kids all get nice allowances and the use of a late-model car for their dates, where all the seniors graduate and the boys go off to college rather than the Army, where all the girls get dates to the Prom and no one drops out of school for six months "to visit an aunt in Florida," where Daddy never loses his job and Mummy can safely let the door-to-door salesman into the house and Junior buys airplane glue just to build model airplanes... A protected little bourgeois world where nothing is allowed to go wrong, and everyone is just so pleasant and everything is just so nice... A 1950's style, situation comedy high school.

Maybe it works. In sitcoms. But in fandom, in the 1980's, as things really are?

If there is any gaping hole in this argument, it lies in ignoring existence of things which look like controls: rules for the Worldcon business meeting, for instance, or the LASFS bylaws. Are these not controls as I defined?

Close, but no banana. First of all, these tend to be operating rules enjoined upon the participants, lacking means of enforcement. Suppose a person running a Worldcon business meeting chose to ignore a necessary report from a standing committee and gavelled the meeting to a close. Would that meeting be reopened? Not very likely? Would the person in charge be disciplined, other than being cut from a party list or two. Again, probably not.

Secondly, right now, without looking them up, recite the LASFS bylaws. I seriously doubt many of my readers can do this, or even remember the number LASFS bylaws. And while I do not undertake to prove it rigorously, it seems reasonable to treat regulations which are generally unknown as being substantially different from say prohibitions on homicide.

As if to demonstrate the point, the argument that such things as bylaws count as social controls was actually advanced by none of the fan who was an earlier version of these remarks. Surely, if our intermural procedures really qualified as controls, someone would have remembered them. But no one did.

The argument has been made that what I earlier dismissed as "gossip" and "tolerance" were in fact the fannish counterparts of social controls.

Again, no prize. True, these things act as constraints - potentially - on behavior, but their influence is frequently weak and capriciously applied.

More importantly, they lack the objectivity and the procedural safeguards nominally associated with social controls and fail to be regarded as binding upon us as a whole. The essence of a control is that it be overt when necessary, and intentional effort aimed at coercing certain forms of behavior.

Gossip clearly fails the test. Should I be convicted of bank robbery in a mundane court, even my supporters would expect me to land up with the slammer for a telephone number. But should I be "convicted" of cheating at cards in a fannish gossip session, I remain at large, free to sit in on the LASFS Hell games and to look for the unwary, fleecable neofen at a convention. I might even retain some non-gossip-prone friends and defenders.

Extending or retracting tolerance - putting people on or off party lists, as an example - does a bit better. However, barring collusion among a large number of people, this is apt to be ineffectual. Few of us would have any problem drawing up lists of fen who are being "punished" in such fashion, and who fail completely to modify their behavior to the extent their "punishers" find satisfactory.

Fundamentally, this argument stems from a confusion between controls and what might be termed "controlled" behavior. Fandom is not a perfect anarchy; clearly some of the orderliness and law-abiding behavior we practice in the mundane world is imported into our doings; being human, we maintain a sort of moral momentum, though the forces that act upon us lie outside fandom.

Perhaps "controlled" behavior is sufficient? Do we really need to have any formal controls in fandom? There is a California Highway Patrol, for example: why should LASFS attempt to usurp its authority for enforcing the traffic laws?

I think we can continue to leave highway traffic to the cops. However, occasions do arise where fen have problems needing solutions that might be found in the mundane world, but feel reluctant to resort to such controls. I have heard of one convention which took in several thousand dollars in bad checks, most of it from one person "buying" art. Obviously, art show auction procedures are probably going to be revamped at some point; but that does not constitute a "solution" to the present problem, nor is turning a long-time fan over to the Bunko Squad for fraud particularly satisfactory. Ad hoc methods of redress can be applied ("Give us back the stuff you haven't resold, and pay us \$25 a month till Hell freezes for the rest.") but they do not create a useful precedent, and ultimately they rest on the fear of true, exterior, social controls ("If you don't pay, we will call the cops.").

Certain other problems can be classified as peculiarly fannish. Suppose, to create a purely hypothetical example, that hottrufan Milton Brucifer Craig, having run a small convention once upon a time, wishes to run a much larger convention and that this requires approval from some subset of fandom which encompasses my reader - the LASFS membership, say.

Unhappily, there is some question as to Mr. Craig's competence; his opposition has decided to use that as a minor campaign issue, and the situation is genuinely cloudy. A fraction of his concom thinks he did about as well as might be expected for someone with his limited experience, and that he might continue to be more or less satisfactory in the future; other people on his concom are still regretting that he was not hung by his balls six months before they got to the convention. Both factions, let's assume, are made up of equally knowledgeable and well-intentioned, competent individuals who presumably were in a position to judge.

MBC's last convention made some money for the club, we also assume. Should he get any credit for that? Or is it all explained by the fortuitous cancellation of a rival convention? If the latter, how much would the convention have gone into the red by itself, and how much would he have been to blame for that?

Despite a larger than expected attendance, few of the convention attendees noticed any major evidence of confusion or trouble at the con. Does that indicate he did well? Or does it just mean his concon worked off its collective tail saving his ass? A priori, these are equal probabilities.

To complicate things a bit, MBC, when pressed, is willing to admit he made a number of mistakes. Some of them are very interesting mistakes; now you begin to understand, and even sympathise with, the concon members who attempted to defenestrate him during the Dead Dog Party. Unhappily, the relevance of those mistakes to his putative competence in other circumstances is ambiguous, and in any event those are not the sins others are trying to pin on him.

Now that you have the evidence, cast your ballot...

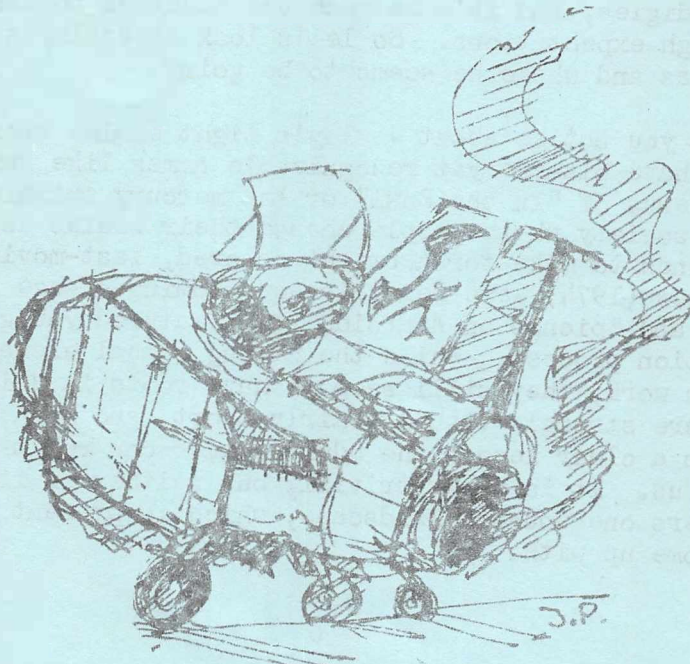
In some way, this strikes me as a quintessential example of a problem fans don't handle very well: making informed judgements on non-trivial matters when the evidence is ambiguous, and arriving at a consensus.

I think it imaginable for such circumstances to arise, and I think it quite likely that in such circumstances, even should he win the election and subsequently run a successful and well-liked convention, the question of whether Milton Brucifer Craig is to be trusted as a convention chairman in the future would never be adequately answered.

In some sense, of course, it can't be, since competence is a rather nebulous, hard-to-quantify characteristic, and any estimate of it is going to be tinged by subjectivism.

Still, if specific instances of bad judgement and malfeasance have been charged against him, it might be possible to examine at least those instances and arrive at some consensus on the specific allegations. Admittedly, such a consensus might be in error - even mundane courts see miscarriages of justice - but it would at least serve to terminate dispute about MBC's ability, and simplify matters the next time he sought some position of responsibility.

Unhappily, I can't think of a good mechanism for doing this. A formal investigation, perhaps? It might take a fair amount of time to perform such an investigation; it might be difficult to keep it from being tangled into fan politics or to keep personal feeling out of it. But it seems to bear some thinking about.



JOHN VARLEY

BY

steve simmons

Quickly -- can you answer this quiz?

1. Who has never missed an annual appearance in Terry Carr's "Best of the Year" anthologies since his first year writing?
2. Very few writers have placed two stories in the same years Carr "Best" anthologies. Who is the only one to do it more than once?
3. Who did Larry Niven call "the next Larry Niven?"

If you answered John Varley (or Herb Boehm) to all three, you probably guessed from the title of this article. But don't worry about your cheating -- we assume that you're here to see Varley, and that's enough to make us forgive you.

SF has certainly has it's share of shooting stars, writers who appear suddenly to hosannas of critical praise and public adulation. Some of them fade just as quickly, having told the few stories they had to tell. Others linger for years, cursed by a highly praised youth, never able to live up to the often unreasonable demands put of them. A few -- very few -- survive and justify everyone's faith. Although it will take years to tell for sure, I suspect John Varley is going to be in that last category.

What makes for one of these flashes in the pan? It's usually the ideas and scenic scapes in their stories. SF is and has been a literature of ideas and travelogues, and this isn't likely to change for any foreseeable future. So when someone comes up with fresh new ideas and places to visit, we all flock around with cries of joy. We like what we're seeing, and we want more. Any drop in quality is greeted with cries of "Sold out!", and a drop in frequency gets cries of "Dried up!". We're very hard on the prodigies, and it's as much our fault as theirs when they can't live up to our all-too-high expectations. So let's look at Varley's shorter works and see what he started as and where he seems to be going.

The first thing you notice about Varley's Eight Worlds stories is that they are FLASHY. Characters have bizarre yet recognizable names like Parameter and Lollipop. We see places like Venus of "In the Bowl" or the mercury swimming pool of "Retrograde Summer." There's a society where people change their bodies as quickly as fans get T-shirts. It all tends to make for a bright-colored, fast-moving universe.

The first stories (1974) were Heinleinesque coming-of-age stories, "In the Bowl," "Retrograde Summer" and "picnic on Nearside" all featured young people going through some sort of maturation process. While the strong sexual element clearly separates them from Heinlein's work, they still seem to have roots in Heinlein.

These stories are strongly visual, fairly short, and rather straightforward. The characters learn a clear lesson the adult reader can relate to, but that lesson is usually unambiguous. It is never trivial, but neither is it especially difficult. Each story also covers one unusual landscape, which is present in the most striking images Varley can come up with.

These stories were followed by more set in the Eight Worlds, but (usually) with all adult characters. While the strong outre landscapes remained, the lessons being learned or the struggles of the protagonists became more subtle. "The Black Hole Passes," with its titular salute to John Campbell, is both an adventure story and a study in isolation. "In the Hall of the Martian Kings" is a simple survival story, with most of its attraction coming from the landscape and the fauna developed. "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank" is a quite flashy story of a man "living" in a computer until his stolen body can be returned and the rather peculiar psychological problems this entails.

About this time (1976), Varley began writing outside the Eight Worlds universe. "Manikins" is almost without setting and presents a rather horrifying explanation for parts of our world. The Moon of Anna-Louise Bach, discussed below, is presented as a radical departure from that of the Eight Worlds. "Air Raid," also discussed below, is outside the Eight Worlds as well but is not related to the Anna-Louise Bach stories. Also appearing around this time were "Lollipop and the Tar Baby" and "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance," both in the Eight Worlds. While enjoyable, they were best read as idea stories, similar to the type written by Niven in his early days.

All these stories are good reads. They are not only fine examples of SF as an adventure literature, but are chock full of references from both in and out of SF. The titles alone reflect sources as diverse as Uncle Remus and Gene Kelly. Musical references in particular are commons, with Varley showing a startlingly varied taste. Varley's roots are not just in SF, but run through all modern popular culture.

Underneath the flash there is substance. Although all of the Eight Worlds characters are recognisably of the same society, they are not totally homogenous. There are conservative groups on Luna, wackos on Pluto, and so forth. On one hand the variation is not as much as we would see on Earth, but on the other one we must remember this society has tremendous communication facilities. This would tend to break down existing cultural differences while preserving similarities. Since all of the Eight Worlds groups came from Luna in their not-too-distant past, it's not unreasonable to find more similarities than differences.

But Varley has not locked himself into the Eight Worlds. In a somewhat similar but unconnected universe we have his stories about Anna-Louise Bach. They're placed in Luna, but not at all a flashy place. One is almost immediately reminded of New York City. Bach, a police lieutenant/captain, helps reinforce that feeling with her somewhat hard-boiled, big-city attitude. In the two stories she is central to, "Bagatelle" and "The Barbie Murders," were stripped of their SF format they could be reasonably placed in almost any large modern city.

The bleakness of the cityscape (grey, very crowded and limited) is matched by the society. In both stories, a central theme is an individual or group that is driven over the edge by this society. The Barbies are unable to handle the world they live in and retreat into surgical and communal anonymity. The living bomb is much more comfortable with his metal replacements than with his fleshy original self. Both show characters driven beyond mere eccentricity into obscene parodies of humanity.

But all is not lost in this world. In "Barbie Murders" Bach decides to take justice - and punishment - into her own hands. She sidesteps legalisms and the mores of the Barbies to bring a primitive, eye-for-an-eye justice. She is an idealist in her own way, and will strive to do the best she can in a far from pleasant world.

Similarly the response after disarming the living bomb - "Do you know a nice place?" - goes beyond the quirks of the character. Taken at face value, it's the inappropriate response of an unbalanced person. Examination of Varley's other work shows that there is something else being expressed. The disarmer has not wiped the

occurrence from his mind, but neither has he continued to focus on it. Varley seems to be saying that this particular place is terrible, but one should still make the best one can of it. Survival is worth it at almost any cost; and with any life there can be joy and enjoyments.

Similar in some ways is "Air Raid." The protagonists come from an Earth that has perhaps only a very few years to live. Literally rotting on their feet, they're kidnapping healthy people from our time to use as colonists. Three out of four will die, and the survivors will be at a Stone Age level for generations. But the kidnapers would rather they could take the same slim chance for primitive survival over no survival at all. A similar attitude comes through - it's better to be fighting and living under terrible conditions than not to be living at all.

These later stories, most of them written from 1976 to 1979, show a change in Varley's work. The flashy scenery begins to become background rather than foreground. It is still present, of course, but it no longer dominates the stories. A good example of these stories is "Equinoctical." The story delineates the relationship between a human and a Symb, using the forces separation of a pair as a plot device. While the tale is located in Saturn's rings and has the usual assortment of Varley's unusual people and places, the scenery and the society do not dominate as they did in the earlier stories. Instead the focus is on the very intense, personal symbiosis, both natural and physical, required for living in the Rings. The flashy backgrounds are still present, but they are definitely background, not foreground.

This story also begins Varley's first exposition of how the Eight Worlds society grew. In other stories it is present as a "mature" society, almost static in its colorfulness. The story of the Symb, together with "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance," gives the reader a much better feeling for just how the society got there in the first place.

More important is the recent story (1979) "Options." For the first time we see a society that is recognizably part ours, part the Eight Worlds. The sex and body changes that are everyday occurrences of the Eight Worlds are just beginning to become popular, which becomes the central conflict of the story. A married woman with children begins to experiment with modifying her body, eventually switching sexes. One obvious route for the story is how she perceives sexual differences and discrimination in her supposedly egalitarian society. While this is explored somewhat, it is not the main thrust of the story. Rather it is a touching examination of how her relationship with her husband changes. There is no clear-cut change on his end - he does not totally accept her new attitude but neither does he reject it. Neither character is a paragon (although some of the walkons come too close), but both their failings and their willingness to try to work together make it a very human story.

No mention of Varley's work would be complete without "The Persistence of Vision." This tale of an isolated society built by and for blind deaf-mutes is powerful, disturbing and oddly incomplete. The society they build is startling and almost un-human, yet is described so reasonably we find it very believable. As portrayed by the sighted narrator we can understand by analogy what it must be like, yet it still remains fundamentally beyond the readers grasp. The ending, while somewhat unsatisfying, is consistent with this. If the reader accepts as a basic premise that he cannot understand the society, the ending becomes believable. The willingness of Pink and the narrator to pay the price they do for understanding is equally plausible if we grant that they can see the pathway (although not the end goal). The reader is left without a full understanding, but this is basic to the story.

In the seven years he's been published, Varley has changed as a writer. In the

beginning the stories were rather simple and the characters rather straightforward. As he grew more skilled, the flashiness receded into the background and the humans came to the foreground. The flash is still present of course, but now it is the setting, not the story. Although we have only looked at his shorted works here, the same is reflected in his three novels. "Ophiuchi Hotline" is mostly flash and somewhat jerky, but for a first novel it is quite impressive. "Titan" is a massive tour de force, one of the best adventure stories produced in quite some time. While it has a good deal of human interest, it is the exploration of Gaea that is central to the book. "Wizard" delves much deeper into the attitudes and problems of the protagonists, but the adventure story gets equal billing to the coming of age of Robin and Chris. Topics of ethics and religion are raised but not selited, and perhaps this will be taken care of in "Demon," due this January. Varley is still learning his way in the novel, however. It should be quite interesting to see what he tackles once the Gaeian trilogy is complete.

Where will he go from here? No telling. It looks promising, though. From a very strongly story-telling start Varley has broadened and matured his themes. Even if he never writes another word, he will be remembered in the SF fraternity as a good writer. But Varley shows no signs of peaking yet. The themes grow broader and more ambitious, the prose is good. His essential optimism about life will certainly continue to draw him readers, and he certainly seems to have a commitment to writing as both a craft and as art. His willingness to tackle broader themes is heartening, and the job he has done of it so far is encouraging. Only time will tell -- but I think we've got a lot of good reading ahead of us.

FALKLAND CON

((What follows are two items written by the editors and inflicted upon the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. To establish the correct blames for our LoC writers the original motion was authored solely by Mark and the con report solely by Marty Cantor.))

Be it moved that since Los Angeles intends to host the 1984 WorldCon and since someone probably still needs a tax deduction for next year, LASFS send one or more delegates to the science fiction convention at Port San Carlos in the Malvinas (soon to be known - again - as the Falkland Islands). It is further suggested that since the convention begins tomorrow in a war zone the delegate or delegates take the following precautions:

1. Don't fly in on British Airways.
2. Wear a bullet-proof propellor beanie.
3. Have fully paid life insurance.
4. Carry a weapon (the Spanish translation of Dhalgren will suffice).
5. Enjoy the company of sheep.

Signed: Mark R. Sharpe
Marty Cantor
Galen A. Tripp

As ordered at the last LASFS meeting, we attended the regional con last week in the Falkland Islands. It was not easy to do, though, as neither British nor Argentine Airlines were flying there. So we had to go via Australia and flew on the connecting service between Canberra and the Falklands - Ornithopter Airways, owned by a fan, Leigh Edmonds. Of course, it is also owned by a vacuum cleaner and an electric toaster.

When we arrived in the Falklands we raised quite a flap. I mean, it looked like they were going to shoot at us. It turned out they were very upset at what we were bringing them. You see, we have all been deceived as to the climate of those islands and they were extremely unhappy at receiving the cloudy and overcast weather that the LASFS ordered us to bring with us. The Falklands are really balmy, tropical islands (or is it the inhabitants who are balmy - it makes no difference). They've even palm trees down there - or at least they looked like palm trees. Instead of having dates or coconuts growing on them, however, they dropped rather large icebergs.

Unfortunately, we did not get to the con at its beginning. When we got there the con was already in full swing. And we must say that it looks like the weapons and costume fans are not just a phenomena at American cons. Wherever we went there were always some costumed nerds pointing weapons at us. If that concom is not craeful, they are going to find somebody getting hurt at future cons.

As a first con by the group that put it on we must say that SheepCon 1 was really a bang up con. John Brunner, who wrote "The Sheep Look Up," was the Guest of Honor. Phillip K. Dick, author of "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep," was Ghost of Honor.

If you could push your way past the hordes of weapons freaks you could even find programming of sorts. Sarge Workman was leading a panel on "Zigger and Better Fox-holes for Fun and Profit," Jerry Pournelle chaired a panel on "The Productive Uses of Pacifism on the Battlefield as the Most Basic Plot-line in SF Novels," and Marjii El-lers demonstrated "Regency Dancing Whilst Dodging Bullets." Bruce Pelz demonstrated the use of complete silence as a winning Hell technique when being chased by an Exocet missile. Alan Winston took totally hilarious and completely inaccurate minutes of all the proceedings.

The concom copied some English cons and provided a disco in the evenings, the music being provided by that wonderfully fannish group Elayne and the Elephants.

a book review by stan burns

SHUTTLE DOWN by Lee Correy. A Del Rey Book, \$2.25, 1981.

A suspenseful tale of how a space shuttle is forced to abort in the middle of a take off from Vandenburg and make a forced landing on Easter Island. The main thrust of the story deals with the technological and sociological hurdles that have to be overcome in returning the craft back to the U.S. At the time I read the book, one of the subplots - a KGB inspired terrorist raid to destroy the shuttle - seemed rather corny and took away from the fascinating details of moving the downed shuttle. After all the Russian propaganda during the first shuttle launch about it being a military offensive weapons system, I wonder how silly it really is....

Anyway, the book is one of those nuts-and-bolts gadget stories that George Smith used to write so well. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Rating: Good.

LETTER COLUMN

All replies to the comments made by the readers this issue are by Marty Cantor.

MIKE GLICKSOHN writes: It's quite amazing to me how such two stalwart faneds as Mike G - notorious for his impeccably designed and reproduced minor fannish masterpieces - and Marty C - accepted as a casual yet concerned and competent creator - could combine forces, completely cancel each other out, and produce such a godawfully ugly and inept fanzine as SHAGGY 77. Must be yet another aspect of the legendary fannishness of LASFS: the whole is a hell of a lot less than the sum of its parts.

Not to belabor the obvious but the printing on this issue (or at least my copy of this issue) is abysmal, the set-off is atrocious, the headings are illegible, the typos are incredibly overabundant and the material is rather bland. Other than that, though, it's a pretty fair first issue. Oh...it's not a first issue...it's a 77th issue...oh...dear...

Sorry, fellas, but on this one, we all lose.

Although I have little enthusiasm for weapons as such and considerable scorn for people who flourish them in an attempt to attract attention and establish a reputation they cannot achieve any other way, I'd be against banning them from conventions because of the dubious precedent that would establish. (I agree that people who are irresponsible in their treatment of potentially dangerous pieces of costume equipment should be dealt with by whatever security the con has but that's different from banning such items or trying to restrict them to only certain times or places at the con.) If we try and ban the costume and/or weapon freaks by setting up restrictions at our cons to discourage them, who is next? The card players? (They restrict conversation, so I've told.) The drinkers? (Some of them occasionally make fools of themselves, so I've told.) No...I like fandom the way it is: a place where we all can relax and enjoy ourselves, avoiding those we don't wish to associate with and tolerating the foibles of others as we would have them tolerate ours. Let's keep it that way.

((Despite the fun that many of us are having with the rhetoric on this issue, the probable "real" solution to this problem is what seems to be happening at several cons, the prohibition of all weapons except at the Masquerades. This may not be as emotionally satisfying as screaming at a weapon-wielder ~~who just ran for the door with his sword~~, but it will accomplish the purpose of making cons more liveable for those not interested in weapons whilst allowing the proper display of weapons as parts of costumes.))

Buck Coulson writes: I agreed with Glyer last time because I'm as opposed as he is to indiscriminate sword-waving, and chases through hotel lobbies and halls for any reason; that sort of thing is outgrown by intelligent people by age 12. Unfortunately, too many fans are no more intelligent than mundanes these days - and far more emotional.

This time, however, I disagree; like all too many extreme liberals, Mike is blaming the object rather than the person. And as for "the imagery of violence as a celebration," I assume Mike totally avoids such national holidays as Independence day,

Memorial Day, Veteran's Day and so on. If he doesn't think that science fiction is compatible with an imagery of violence, let him go back and read some of Ed Hamilton's stories. (Or Poul Anderson's, or Roger Zelazny's, or....) In short, Mike made a total ass of himself with that statement. The responsibility of the weapon-carrier is precisely the point; responsible people neither endanger nor jostle their friends and/or fellow attendees.

((Calling Glycer an extreme liberal is something like calling Jerry Pournelle a woman. Aside from the fact that both Jerry and Mike will take extreme umbrage if you refer to them that way in person (Jerry would probably scream at you and Mike would audit your tax return), neither is really the creature so named. I am an extreme liberal; by my lights, Glycer is a rock-ribbed conservative.))

Arthur D. Slavaty writes: Harry Warner's reference to similarities between Nazi propaganda about the Jews and feminist propaganda about fans has piqued my curiosity. Has he seen feminist references to a fannish conspiracy which controls the world's banks and governments? Feminist quotations from a dubious source called "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Fandom?" Or perhaps feminist claims that cons are coverups for unspeakable ceremonies at which little girls are ritually murdered? I would say that, for one who is genetically disqualified from membership in A Woman's Apa, I am relatively familiar with fannish feminism, but I have never seen anything that even remotely resembles this sort of thing, as Harry's remarks would seem to imply. But perhaps he has seen more feminist writing than I have. I would hate to think that he was wildly exaggerating or talking about things he has no understanding of.

((Oh, come now, Arthur. If you want to require that people write only write about things they understand you would destroy Fandom As We Know It. You would also force Robert Anton Wilson to get a real job. I mean, are you not true believer in Chaos?))

Samuel Edward Konkin III writes: I wonder why Shaggy has managed to distill out of the LASFS members as editors I not only get along with but like a whole lot? Anyways, there's certainly no excuse left for not loccing and regularly at that.

I find it fascinating and informative and most indicative of the genius of Ted Johnstone which I have heard mostly second-hand so far (I knew him only most casually); he had already internalized and was expressing to noninitiates concepts in a non-threatening way that I only began to be able to do years later. With a few footnotes to explain the most obscure fannish terms, "Scrimshaw" could be a lead editorial or feature article in New Libertarian. I have quibbles to pick with it....but in 1980, not 1969.

Len Moffat's Shaggy history not only added a much-neglected dimension to LASFS that even those of us around for a few years still needed, but even more added a dimension to Len I've not observed before. It's a common phenomena that one doesn't appreciate a comrade or close friend or family member until that person is facing outward and dealing with outsiders in defense of your common bond and unnoticed brilliance comes to the fore. Shaggy's revival is having all sorts of unanticipated side-benefits.

Alan Winston's story succeeds as ultra-in-group faanfic and it certainly should be encouraged; however, the story failed as a story, the ending falling flat. I would rather have Alan write a story that made it as a story and as an in-joke; and if I who got 75% of the references (I think) would, imagine the casual outsider reading this. Alan certainly can do it; don't rush him next time.

Both your editorials were remarkably non-controversial; considering both of you dive headlong into controversy in your own publications gives one pause to wonder about the effects of being "officialized." Heavy lies the head wearing the LASFS crown of editor? Come on, guys, take a chance of being tarred and feathered; just

let it be clearly known you're writing your own putrid thoughts and not the even more putrid thoughts of LASFS collectively and representatively.

Many of the viewpoints in the locs express a non-fringie, or should I say, anti-fringefan viewpoint. Great, I sympathize, keep them at arm's length until they pass literacy tests, and pray they don't pass a Supreme Court decision requiring they be bussed from Doug Wright cons to make up for our discrimination.

Don Franson writes: I agree with Mike's article, but to fill the letter column with almost nothing else but comments on one article or editorial is in the worst tradition of Brass Tacks. Surely some of the WAHF letters had something to say about the rest of Shaggy, if only "welcome back!"

Harry Warner remarks on fanzine fandom's minority status, which is something that should be accepted by fanzine fans without resentment or fighting it. Actually, fanzine fandom was always a relatively small group surrounded by Philistines. It's just that the Philistines are among us at cons instead of out there in the mundane world. It's something like the situation of magazines versus paperbacks - there still are the same number of magazines now, but paperbacks have proliferated.

((Now that I'm editing the lettercol you can expect a difference in approach. To tightly edit the letters down to core comments on one major issue was Mike's approach. My approach is to let the loccers ramble on about most anything until we run out of room. I suspect that neither approach is A Good Thing.))

Harry Warner writes: The loc column this time reminds me of the last time I went to a worldcon in New York City. I'd heard so much about New York's strict laws involving concealed weapons that I left home the 1 1/2" long penknife I usually carried with me to open envelopes, clip newspaper items, and so on. Before the con, I found a stack of music at a second-hand store, wanted to mail it to myself so I wouldn't have to wrestle with on the long bus ride, bought wrapping paper and twine, then couldn't figure out any way to cut the twine to the proper length. I looked at knives in a couple of stores and found them ridiculously expensive. So the devil whispered in my ear and I decided to break a water glass in my hotel room to obtain a cutting edge. I picked it up, hesitated because of what conscience was doing to my intention, and saw a big chip was out of its rim, making it dangerous to drink from but just right for cutting bits of twine. When I told some fan or other about my adventure, he asked me why I hadn't bought a small package of razor blades, making me feel awful stupid.

((Somehow, Harry, I doubt that you are the type of dangerous fan-with-weapon about whom Glyer was raving. ~~But keep that broken water glass hidden!~~))

David Stever-Schnoes writes: There are two variations Paula doesn't seem to touch on, that being first off, the series in which the author wishes to make a point of characterization; perhaps this is a highly artificial category - I can only point to Brian Stableford's Hooded Swan and Daedalus series, where the characters of Grainger and Alexis Alexander are genuinely changed by the events around them, and the sotry has an end or point. One can look at Crap Kennedy or Dumarest for examples of series where the point is to earn an advance for the author, and nothing more (I find Dumarest to be interesting, but I gave up at „17. Nothing was happening.). Are there more examples? I don't know. I find Stableford to be an exciting author because of his characterizations.

The second variation is the Future History. Having devoted long hours to conversations about them, I define a series as having a continuing character, whereas a Future History has many characters set against a consistent background. This sort of mind exercise fascinates writers, too. Railroad Martin has something like three or four histories going, David Gerrold (some years ago) said that he was trying to link EVERYTHING that he had written into ONE history, and the list goes on. Publishers have only recently begun to advertise the linkage of some of these books.

Linda Ann Moss writes: Hey, there's nothing wrong with getting a fanzine out on October 45. Why I remember a con just recently (well, would you believe last year) that was held on March 65-67. Why it's almost fannish to do so. Sorry to see that the reason this issue was so late was because of your co-editor fafiating. Oh well. Let's hope the new one doesn't. Maybe if you stopped pushing them so hard?

I don't really know what to say about Ted Johnstone's article. Anarchy is anarchy. But as I got more involved with the club I realised that indeed it wasn't. Given as many people as we have there are people behind (and in front) the scenes who do more or less run things. I don't think that fandom at large, in the few years I've been involved with it, has changed all that much. Things get done because they need to get done and enough people realize that and step forward when needed. There seem to be enough people around to organize things that even if things were deliberately disorganized and left to run their course somebody would stick his or her nose in it and try to change it. Sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. I don't think in the long run anarchy would last in any kind of fannish organization. We change. New people come in. Old people leave. People become discouraged with the way things are run and try to change them. Fandom is growing and the larger it gets the more organized it will need to be. I get very overwhelmed by the size of fandom nowadays. And I've only been in it $4\frac{1}{2}$ years. (My Ghod, has it been that long?) I find that the smaller things are the more I enjoy them. Maybe anarchy is what we need. It wouldn't be for everybody or for most of fandom. If it were less organized (or not at all organized) many of the newer people would not be around I suspect. I think that the largeness of it all is because of the very organization of it all.

WAHF: Oh, lots of people, but it has been so long who cares anymore? Besides, I haven't been able to find the WAHF file. See you next issue and keep those cards and letters coming in.

((Artists thisish: Rotsler, pg. 1 :: Buzz Dixon, pg. 2 :: Joe Pearson, pg. 7))

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